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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of parents and friends (reference groups) in forming college students' sex-role orientations. Emphasis is placed on the mother's domestic, parental, and achieved (professional/occupational) role and on the mother's modeling transmission effect on her daughter's and son's sex-role attitudes. The hypothesis is that parents are more important than friends in determining sex-role attitudes. Data are based on a random sample of 659 students in a middle-sized, mid-western university. Students were directed to respond to questions regarding the number of best friends, frequency of contact with friends, personality disposition, self-fulfillment goals, frequency of home visits, duration of stay at home, contact with parents by letter and telephone while at college, parental educational level and sociceconomic status, mother's occupation, mother's sex-role outlook, and allocation of household responsibilities. Findings indicated that, as hypothesized, males and females responded differently to parental role modeling (males considered their mothers as equal to their fathers and nontraditional if they worked outside the home, whereas females considered their mothers as more or less traditional because of their life styles at home, regardless of whether their mothers also worked outside the home). Findings also showed that interaction with friends in a nonfamilial milieu exposes students to a wide variety of attitudes and life styles where sex-role equality is supported. These attitudes tend to temper rather than change sex-role attitudes formed at home, and mothers generally play a traditional role within the home. The conclusions are that parental interaction is generally more important than peer associations in influencing sex-role orientation and that maternal attributes provide a different model of behavior for daughters and sons. (DB)

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REFERENCE GROUP INTERACTION AND SEX ROLE ORIENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between reference group interaction, based on parents and friends, and sex role orientation for each sex taking into consideration mother's socioeconomic status and work experience. The data are based on a random sample of college students. The findings show that parental interaction is more important than friendship associations in influencing sex role orientation especially among males. The modeling transmission effect of mother's attributes on her daughter's sex role socialization via interaction is consistently traditional, whereas for the son her traditional influence is circumstantial. The findings are interpreted in the context of reference group and role model theories.

REFERENCE GROUP INTERACTION AND SEX ROLE ORIENTATION

A recent investigation analyzed the role reference groups play in the formation of familial sex role attitudes (_____ and _____, 1980). It was found that parents are more important than friends in influencing parental and marital sex role attitudes particularly among males. This result stimulated the further study of reference group interaction in shaping sex role attitudes beyond the family context, in an effort to understand the impact of reference group supports on various aspects of males' and females' sex role orientation. Moreover, in view of the rapidly changing sex roles in society, individuals find themselves constantly confronted by an environment where sex norms, expectations and standards have to be discussed, clarified or formed. It is, therefore, particularly important, when individuals become subject to multiple and divergent social groups, to determine which group with whom the individual interacts is important to one's orientation.

In this study, a reference group theoretical framework is used to explain sex role orientation. Reference groups as used by social psychologists (Kelley, 1968, Shibutani, 1968) constitute the structure of expectations and standards, the bases for self-evaluation and the source of attitude formation. In this respect, attitudes and behaviors can be studied in relation to role models where persons learn appropriate norms and form attitudes by identifying with significant others. This learning

process is largely based on the process of interaction. Accordingly, the more interaction one has with others, the more likely individuals will engage in communication about their roles and become recipients of interactive responses which may reinforce or challenge their attitudes. On the other hand, those who have low levels of interaction with significant others, are less likely to exchange their views. Thus, when communication is infrequent, support for one's attitudes will be low. This is not to imply that common attitudes do not lead to group interaction (Duncan, et al., 1971). However, most studies on reference groups treat attitude formation as a result rather than a cause of group interaction i.e., friendships, parent-child involvement and the like.

Research on the socialization of sex role attitudes indirectly related to the present investigation document the importance of parents as role models for children (Helson, 1972; Lynn, 1962; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974; Tangri, 1972; Yorburg, 1974). Benson (1968: 211-215), however, notes that although the family plays a direct and forceful role in the sexualization process of girls, the extra-familial world including peers is more important for boys than girls. A study limited to college women (Kammeyer, 1964) shows that consistency in attitudes towards feminine role behavior is positively related to number of college friends, dating frequency and in a limited way to frequency of parental contact. Both Reiss (1967: 139) and Teevan (1972: 283-291) noted that the reference group is an important determinant of sexual attitudes and that as permissiveness of the peer group increases, sexual permissiveness also increases and that individuals tend to take on the attitudes of those with whom they associate. Inasmuch as these studies differ in focus and show variation in the source of reference

group influence, it is clear that increased social interaction with friends, parents or other significant others contributes to shaping attitudes and life styles. However, the reviewed studies as well as the research on reference groups and sex role behavior among children (Lynn, 1976, Lewis, 1972; Hoffman, 1977; Bearison, 1979; Santrock, 1970; Sandidge and Friedland, 1975) do not address themselves directly to the basic objective of this study or provide a systematic analysis of the relationship between reference group interaction and specific dimensions of sex role orientation for each sex. Indeed, this is a concern that has received little attention in the exploding literature on sex roles.

In this study, parental and friendship interaction are treated as predictors of sex role orientation based on personality disposition, social structural equality and self-fulfillment--attitudes exclusive to personal and institutional equality. It is expected, that parents as role model influences represent a more traditional culture which supports the status quo. Thus, the life style expectations communicated by parents, will reflect the normative culture. On the other hand, high friendship interaction is likely to be associated with a nontraditional sex role orientation. The underlying assumption is that the majority of college friends espouse values associated with egalitarian relationships. Moreover, previous research shows that college students are overrepresented especially among the population of women who identify themselves as members of the women's movement (Acker and Howard, 1972: 8), and thus support the ideology of sex role equality.

Other factors may affect the proposed relationship between reference group interaction and sex role orientation like mother's education, occupation

and work experience. These characteristics represent an important dimension in the effectiveness of the mother's role because they imply that mothers possessing attributes of achieved status are able to articulate their maternal roles in distinctive ways. Such women present models to their children of what mothers can do in terms of their home setting and the accomodation they are able to make between domestic, parental and achieved roles. Although a number of studies have focused on mother's achieved status and sex role attitudes (Mason and Bumpass, 1975, Brogan and Kutner, 1976; Bayer, 1975; Lipman-Blumen, 1972; Scanzoni, 1975; Meier, 1972; Vanfossen, 1977; _____, 1978, 1979) with some inconsistencies in results, these investigations have ignored the study of the mother's modeling transmission effect on her daughter's and son's sex role orientation via the interaction process. A previous analysis (_____ and _____, 1980) revealed the significance of this approach in the unique differential impact of the mother on the formation of her children's familial attitudes. On the basis of this result, it was deemed necessary to further study the influence of the mother in the shaping of extra-familial attitudes through reference group interaction.

Additional features which distinguish this study from others is the multidimensional nature of sex role orientation based on factor analysis, the attitudinal measures which reflect the changing status of the sexes and the inclusion of men and women as the point of comparison.

Methodology

The data were collected by a questionnaire from college students of a middle sized university in a mid-western city. A random sample of 30

scheduled classes were selected (excluding laboratory or recitation sessions, field, intern or practicum enrollment, independent readings, performing arts sessions, thesis or dissertation) of which 27 participated and permitted the questionnaire to be administered to those present during a regularly scheduled class period. All data were collected during a two week period in the Spring of 1976: 659 questionnaires were obtained of which 17 were unuseable because of missing data. All questions were close ended with the exception of mother's and father's occupation.

The population composition of the sample shows approximately two-fifths are males, three-fifths are females, 60 percent are freshmen and sophomores, 30 percent upperclass men and women, and 10 percent are graduate students. The majority of the students (79 percent) are between 18 and 21 years of age and they represent different areas of academic interest. The sample shows more diversity in religious affiliation, size of home town, socio-economic status of parents and family composition. Differences in demographic characteristics between the sexes, however, are not significant. Thus, the relationship between reference group interaction and the sex role orientation of males and females cannot be attributed to the distribution of population characteristics in the sample.

Definitions and Measurement of Variables:

Reference group interaction is based on parental and friendship associations:

Parental interaction refers to (a) frequency of going home--once a week or more, once or twice a month, few times a year; (b) duration of stay at home--three weeks or more, less than two weeks; (c) frequency of writing

letters to parents and (d) frequency of calling home--once a week or more, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never. The frequency of going home along with the latter two aspects of parental interaction represent the degree of affiliation encompassed in a person's web of parental commitment and obligations, while duration of stay at home indicates the intensity of the relationship one has with the family. The same aspects of parental interaction were measured by Kammeyer (1964) in the form of an index in order to minimize the distance factor. However, in order not to obsecure the effect of parental interaction on sex role orientation, each form of parental interaction is analyzed separately and jointly in this study.

A point may be raised here with respect to the distance students are from their homes insofar as going and staying home are affected by the distance factor. Results show that only five percent of the students live at home (this group is not included in the analysis), while 81 percent are within 200 miles from their homes. Thus, going home for the large majority of students is possible on weekends. Moreover, the response pattern in terms of frequency of contact and duration of home visit for those who live within or over 200 miles away from home is similar. In other words, distance does not seem to be a critical factor in the amount of interaction students have with parents.

Friendship interaction is measured in terms of: (a) number of best friends--three or more best friends, one or two best friends; (b) frequency of contact with friends--every day, few times a week or less often; (c) duration of time spent with friends at any one occasion--five hours or

more, three to four hours, two hours or less. The measure on friendship interaction emphasizes the degree and intensity of affiliation with peers--these relationships serve, in part, as indicators of outside influences.

For purposes of analysis, the different responses for each aspect of parental and friendship interaction are combined into two or three categories at a cutting point where the number of cases is approximately equivalent. The different forms of parental and friendship interaction are not correlated based on Pearson's r. The predictor variables are therefore, independent.

Sex role orientation is measured in terms of three dimensions, namely, personality disposition, social-structural equality and self-fulfillment. Empirically, these variables emerged on the basis of factor analysis (_____ and _____, 1979, 1980 on the methodological analysis). As a further test of the multidimensional nature of sex role orientation, correlation analysis showed that the attitudinal dimensions were moderately correlated and relatively distinct. In addition, external variable analysis based on multiple regression and correlation indicated significant relationships between the respective dimensions of sex role orientation and external criteria like situational conditions and other attitudes (_____ and _____, 1980). These results suggest that sex role orientation can be conceptualized and measured along multiple dimensions which are represented by a profile of scores.

Theoretically, based on role theory, there appears to be considerable support for the technique of measuring roles in terms of the norms that structure them (Bertrand, 1972). Moreover, the measured attitudes towards personal and institutional equality represent important challenging issues

for the family, the peer group and today's society. Thus, from the viewpoint of observational learning, the relevance of the newly emerging roles of the sexes is particularly pertinent to the lives of young adults as they relate to their parents and friends, and internalize a way of thinking which, in turn, influences the individual's own attitudes and actions.

First, personality disposition refers to conceptions about the equal potential of women's and men's personality attributes and traits as well as their interests and preferences (e.g., men can be as sympathetic as women; both men and women are able to reason logically). Greater egalitarianism is indicated by stronger preferences for men and women to have a similar personality disposition. Traditionalism is indicated by endorsing a stereotypical personality differential where women are characterized as expressive and men as instrumental (reliability coefficient based on Cronbach's alpha = .83).

Second, social structural equality indicates egalitarian attitudes within the home as well as in the work place where the wives' and husbands' interests are of equal importance domestically and occupationally (e.g., a wife's career is of equal importance to her husband's; earnings of working wives are as important as those of the husband). A nontraditional response represents a positive endorsement of women's and men's equality within and outside the home whereas traditionalism indicates a preference to keep women outside of labor force with the basic responsibilities of child care and other home duties (reliability coefficient = .85).

Third, self-fulfillment represents an emphasis on the employment of married women along with the individualistic needs, motivations and rights of women (e.g., women hold jobs after they are married to enjoy working in

their field of specialization; ...because staying home does not allow sufficient challenge of talents). Here, also, nontraditionalism is indicated by a preference for women's individualistic benefits and personal preferences, while a traditional response is indicated by lesser preference for the kinds of individual satisfaction for women (reliability coefficient = .83).

The response pattern to the items in each of the attitudinal scales ranges from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strorgly disagree). The lower the total score, the more nontraditional is the subject's orientation. The higher the total score, the more traditional is the respondent's attitude. The correlation of each attitudinal item to the total score of a given scale (Pearson's r) is significant at the .001 level. Although the 90 percent reproducibility criterion for a Guttman scale is not met, the coefficients suggest a "quasi-scalable" pattern with a reasonably consistent focus on sex role orientation.

The intercorrelations (corrected for attenuation) between the different attitudinal scales show a correlation of .54 ($P < .01$, $N = 642$) between personality disposition and social-structural equality, a correlation of .38 ($P < .01$, $N = 642$) between self-fulfillment and personality disposition and a correlation of .38 ($P < .01$, $N = 642$) between self-fulfillment and social structural equality. These moderate significant correlations between the scales suggest that while the dimensions are part of the same general concept they are sufficiently independent of each other to warrant treating them as separate variables. The attitudinal items for each of the scales in this study and the differences by sex in the response to each item of a given scale appear in previous studies (Tomeh and Street, 1979, 1980).

The Analytic Technique:

Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA), the statistical technique utilized in this study, relates a number of nominal or higher level predictor variables to a continuous dependent variable within an additive model (Andrews, et al., 1967). In other words, the MCA technique treats each category of each independent variable as a dummy variable. Using additive multiple least squares regression, it adjusts the mean of the dependent variable for each category of the independent variables by the amount of deviation from the total sample (grand) mean due to intercorrelation with other independent variables in the analysis. Eta (or correlation ratio) represents the gross effect of the predictor on the dependent variables, i.e., without controlling the effect of the other variables. Beta (which is like the regression weight) represents the net effect of that predictor on the dependent variable when the other predictors in that analysis are controlled.

The proportion of variance explained in any analysis is independent of that explained by other analyses. It is equal to the explained sum of squares divided by the total sum of squares, not to the square of the multiple correlation coefficient because the latter has been corrected for degrees of freedom (the N varies from table to table as a function of missing data cases).

In analyzing the data for this study, it is important to develop categories for the research variables. The subcategories for the independent variables--reference group interaction, were indicated previously. The dependent variables--dimensions of sex role orientation, comprise a total score for all the items in each scale for every respondent.

Findings

Parental and friendship interaction are analyzed to predict variation in each of the sex role orientation dimensions. The basic relationship shows that altogether reference group interaction explains a small proportion of the variation in sex role orientation (a maximum of 6 percent). Nonetheless, significant relationships appear in the female group; for example, parental interaction based on home visits (eta = .19) and friendship associations in terms of number of best friends (eta = .18) are significantly related to women's self-fulfillment. In addition, communication with parents via the channel of writing letters home (eta = .16) is significantly predictive of social structural equality, while number of best friends is significantly related to personality disposition (eta = .11). Although neither the reference group nor the form of interaction is consistently related to all aspects of sex role orientation, the pattern of influence shows that daughters who rarely go home, write home infrequently and have several best friends (three or more) favor a nontraditional view point. Apparently, exposure to a nonfamilial milieu exposes women to a wider variety of attitudes and life styles where sex role equality is supported. Kammeyer's study (1964) limited to college women indirectly supports the results of this analysis where he shows that attitude consistency about the feminine role is highest for girls with many college friends and lowest for those reporting few college friends.

Interesting relationships appear when mother's education is considered as shown in Table 1 on reference group interaction and sex role orientation for each sex. An examination of the data shows that when the mother is of a higher educational level, parents are more important than friends in

influencing the sex role orientation of their children--sons especially. More specifically, among sons whose mothers have more than a high school education, parental interaction explains a maximum of 21 percent in the variation of sex role orientation as compared to a maximum of 9 percent explained variance among daughters whose mothers have the same educational background. The form of communication daughters have with their parents is primarily based on home visits, whereas sons tend to interact with parents by writing and calling home. For example, the data show that going home is significantly related to women's self-fulfillment (eta = .25), while writing and calling home followed by home visits are significantly predictive of men's views regarding social structural equality (eta = .26, .21 and .13 respectively). Calling home is also significantly related to men's opinion on the issue of personality disposition (eta = .32). Apparently, the indirect interaction sons have with parents provides a feedback on the question of sex role equality where supporters of this view maintain frequent contacts, though the support for egalitarianism is reduced as they go home more often. However, for daughters whose mothers are educated, frequency of home visits or any other form of parental contact is associated with a traditional viewpoint. Although the pattern of findings suggests that parental interaction may be along normative sex role lines, it is not a continued characteristic based on the forthcoming results.

Table 1 About Here

However, the argument that highly educated mothers are likely to be more nontraditional in sex role outlook and tend to transmit this orientation to their daughters (Brogan and Kutner, 1976; Mason and Bumpass, 1975;

Meier, 1972; Vanfossen, 1977) is exaggerated. One may speculate that even when the mother is educated, the home environment exposes the daughter to women's traditional roles where domestic and household duties tend to be the mother's major responsibilities, consequently, the maternal traditional role depresses the daughter's view of sex role equality within or outside the home.

When the mother is on a low educational level, parental interaction declines. However, for men, parental contacts continue to be more important than peer associations as well as more predictive of men's than women's sex role orientation. Although no significant relationships appear for women, the general pattern is that parental interaction, based for the most part on going home and writing letters home, provides a traditional support as such contacts increase in frequency, whereas for sons direct and indirect interaction are associated with nontraditional sex role views.

The findings of previous studies on socioeconomic status and sex role orientation are inconclusive. Some researchers have reported weak or no relationships between these variables (_____, 1978, 1979; Lipman-Blumen, 1972; Scanzoni, 1975), while others show moderate to strong associations (Brogan and Kutner, 1976; Mason and Bumpass, 1975; Meier, 1972; Vanfossen, 1977). In as much as these studies differ in samples, methodological techniques and measurement procedures, the variability in these results may imply that maternal education itself is not as important as the combined effect of maternal education and the interaction process between the mother and her children in determining attitudes towards sex roles. The proposition supported here is the interactive differential modeling effect of

mother's attributes on the sex role ideology of daughters and sons via family interaction.

Mothers education, is not a strong intervening factor in the relationship between males' friendship interaction and sex role orientation. At best, peer interaction explains about 7 percent of the variance in the sex role attitudes of sons whose mothers are highly educated. For this group, frequency of contacts with friends is significantly related to self-fulfillment (eta = .26) in particular. The evidence suggests that sons of educated mothers are more likely to discuss sex role issues with their friends than those whose mothers have a lower educational level. In either case, however, friends have a nontraditional influence.

In contrast, peer interaction for women whose mothers have a low educational level explains a maximum of 9 percent in their sex role orientation, while a maximum of 4 percent explained variance is true in the case of women whose mothers have a higher educational level. For the former group, number of best friends significantly predicts women's sex role views relative to personality disposition (eta = .14) and self-fulfillment (eta = .26). Perhaps the importance of friends reported by women are also women who believe in personal development and the similarity in the personality of the sexes--attitudes which positively contribute to women's self image particularly in the absence of role models at home where the influence of the family appears less effective than friends. Tangri (1972), for example, found that female peers provide a supportive subculture for role innovation and for nontraditionalism while mothers had a negative or conservative influence.

On the other hand, the weak influence of friends among daughters whose mothers are of a higher educational level may imply that the traditional impact of parental interaction on children leaves no room for friends to operate and/or children may be comfortable with the psychological attitudes they hold, thus, the need to seek friends in order to reinforce their attitudes is minimal.

In all, friendship associations have a nontraditional effect on men's and women's sex role orientation. However, the importance of friends is basically among women whose mothers have a low educational level. On the other hand, a high degree of son--parent interaction based on (writing and calling home primarily) contributes to a modern sex role view, whereas increased daughter-parent interaction (based on home visits first and then writing home) means support for traditionalism.

Table 2 shows the relative contribution to variation in sex role orientation by parental and friendship interaction for each sex taking into account mother's occupation. The data show that for all occupational groups (i.e., professional and semiprofessional, skilled and semiskilled, unskilled), parental interaction continues to explain more of the variance in sex role orientation than friendship associations with a few exceptions. Among daughters of unskilled mothers, peer interaction explains between 14 to 18 percent of the variance in self-fulfillment and personality disposition, as compared to 6 percent explained variance by parents. Here number of best friends and/or time spent with friends significantly contribute to the formation of these attitudes even when other aspects of peer interaction are controlled based on the increased beta values. It seems that friends are more effective in influencing sex role attitudes related

to a self-concept than those which are of a more general nature like social structural equality. In this context, it is not surprising to find daughters of unskilled mothers, like their counter female partners whose mothers are of a low educational level, eager to exchange with friends sex role attitudes central to themselves and gain the support of a reference group to enhance their self-image. Apparently, mothers with low socioeconomic status are unable to provide a supportive system to their daughters as they interact together. In fact, skilled/semiskilled mothers are also unable to extend to their daughters modeled role behavior in terms of self-fulfillment where number of best friends, rather than parental interaction, significantly contributes (eta = .22) to a belief in women's rights and interests.

Table 2 About Here

The above pattern characterizes daughters of professional/semiprofessional mothers in that frequency of contact with friends (eta = .22) significantly contributes to personality disposition. In the case of the high and middle occupational groups, however, it is important to remember that the overall impact of parental and friendship associations is equivalent which suggests that there may be some reference group pressure on the part of parents and friends to gain the allegiance of members; consequently, the modeling role transmission effect of the mother with a high or middle occupational level via family interaction is not completely irrelevant of her daughter's sex role perceptions based on self-fulfillment and personality disposition.

No significant relationships are observed for men's peer associations and sex role orientation. At best the explained variation in personality

disposition increases to 12 percent as mother's occupational status declines. The same trend is true for the self-fulfillment dimension. Like women's, men's attitudes towards social structural equality are not affected by friendship associations in any one of the occupational groups. In all, mother's occupational status has the same impact on her daughter's and son's peer interaction relative to sex role orientation with a more felt effect on girls.

When parental interaction is examined, the data show that at every occupational level, such contacts explain more of the variance in the sex role orientation of men (a maximum of 34, 34 and 29 percent) than women (13, 9 and 11 percent explained variance). Significant relationships appear only for the male group in the upper and middle occupational categories. More specifically, among sons whose mothers are of a higher occupational level, frequency of home visits is significantly related to personality disposition ($\beta a = .48$) even when other forms of parental interaction are controlled based on the high beta value. The curious observation, however, is that as sons go home more frequently they become slightly more traditional, while increased contact with parents based on writing and calling home fosters a nontraditional attitude. For daughters, the pattern of influence is associated with greater traditionalism as daughters of the same occupational group increase their contacts with parents in any form. One may speculate, that the mother who is professional/semiprofessional may have developed multiple role skills which enable her to coordinate her various roles effectively, whereby feminine personality role behavior may be performed at home as skillfully as her

instrumental attributes outside the home. Thus, role compartmentalization may be of some consequence to her children's view on the personality of the sexes.

Further examination of the data shows that when the mother is skilled/semiskilled, the pattern of influence discussed above applies to daughters, whereas son-parent interaction is consistently associated with modern views on the issues of personality disposition and self-fulfillment, with significant results for the overall impact of parental interaction (R^2 = .28 and .34 respectively), as well as for specific forms of communication like calling and writing home (eta = .37 and .49). It is interesting to note that as mothers and sons interact indirectly, the transmission of a non-traditional view continues to predominate when sons go home often. Thus far, these findings are consistent with mother's education.

The effect of parental interaction on the sex role orientation of daughters and sons whose mothers are unskilled is inconsistent. The inconsistency in the pattern of influence is likely to increase the vulnerability of children to be under the influence of other socializing agencies as in the observed case of daughters where friends become more important than parents.

Again, the results show the interactive effect of mother's involvement in occupational roles as a factor that cannot be ignored in the study of reference group interaction and selected dimensions of sex role orientation considered central to the self-concept. Surprisingly, social structural equality which incorporates attitudes towards domestic and occupational equality is not strongly affected by the intervening factor of mother's occupational status via the interaction process.

Table 3, shows the relative contribution of variation in sex role orientation by parental and friendship associations for each sex taking into consideration mother's work experience. Overall, the data show that parental interaction is more predictive of the son's than the daughter's sex role orientation. Interestingly, however, the absence of mother's work experience as a life style characteristic tends to augment the sexual socialization of children via parental interaction. For example, for sons whose mothers have never worked, parental interaction explains between 12 to 27 percent of the variation in sex role orientation as compared to a minimum of 4 percent and a maximum of 10 percent explained variance among their counter male partners whose mothers have worked at some point during the respondents school years. The same pattern holds for women, though the differential by work experience is not as distinct as for males. One may speculate, that the differential effect of mother's work experience may be a function of a continued life style pattern of nonworking which results in instilling well defined role expectations in her children, as compared to the mother with an interrupted work pattern who may not be very effective in communicating clarity in sex role standards. It is also possible that the mother with some work experience may be aware of a general societal sex role problem where the statuses of the sexes are in a state of flux; a situation that further complicates effective sex role socialization.

It is important to point out that the pattern of influence on daughters is associated with traditionalism as interaction with parents increases regardless of mother's work experience. This pattern, however, is especially distinct relative to self-fulfillment and daughters whose mothers never worked. Since the attitudinal dimension in question includes attitudes

towards the employment of women, the nonworking mother may impress on the daughter as they interact together her own nonworking status which is not supportive of female labor force participation.

Table 3 About Here

The pattern of influence on sons of nonworking mothers is associated with greater traditionalism relative to self-fulfillment in particular as direct or indirect interaction with parents increases. As noted above, nonworking mothers are not likely to support the employment of women, instead, they probably believe in the normative occupational structure which favors men. The same result is repeated relative to social structural equality (27 percent explained variance) where nonworking mothers may convey to their sons through interaction the belief in a sex typed division of labor.

The pattern of influence on sons whose mothers have worked is somewhat inconsistent. Perhaps there is an association between the interrupted work pattern of the mother and the inconsistent socialization effect on the son which may be reflective of the uncertainty involved in the double role she holds herself. The interactive effect of mother's work experience is, therefore, of some consequence to her children's sex role viewpoint.

Friends continue as a weak reference group in influencing women's and men's sex role orientation. Nonetheless, for daughters whose mothers have a work experience history, the main effects of peer associations are significantly related to attitudes towards self-fulfillment (5 percent

explained variance) where number of best friends is of special importance (eta = .22). Time spent with friends is also predictive of social structural equality (eta = .16) even when other aspects of friendship interaction are controlled based on the increased beta value. Mother's work experience increases the importance of friends in predicting a nontraditional orientation relative to these attitudes. No significant relationships appear among daughters whose mothers have never worked. In this group, parents provide the need for a supportive system. Unlike mother's education and occupation, mother's work experience affects the relationship between peer interaction and the daughter's sex role orientation differently.

For sons, the most pronounced effect of friendship interaction is among those whose mothers have no work experience where number of best friends contributes significantly to self-fulfillment (eta = .29), though parents remain as the primary object of psychological support. Thus, the nontraditional influence of friends in this respect is minimal compared to the traditional impact of parents. A similar trend was true in the case of mother's occupation only.

In all, the results indicate that mother's socioeconomic status and work experience are important intervening variables in the interaction process as sons and daughters are affected differently.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that parental interaction is more important than peer associations in influencing sex role orientation with the exception of daughters whose mothers have low socioeconomic status or some

work experience. Despite the different sex role orientation dimensions examined here and elsewhere (_____ and _____, 1980 on familial sex role attitudes), there is a genuine desire among young adults for dependence on parents where one finds security and the role positions which one can aspire to as an adult. In fact, even when friends become important reference figures relative to self-fulfillment or personality disposition--attitudes central to one's self-image, the influence of the family persists within certain limits. Thus, the continued reliance on the family as a primary group, reflects the strength of this institution in the socialization of sex role attitudes. It may be that parents are too reluctant to permit their children to be turned to outside influences especially in view of the rapidly changing status of the sexes in the general society. This argument gains further support based on the data which show the overall traditional impact of parental interaction as compared to the nontraditional effect of friends.

A point may be raised as to the possible potential source of conflict which may result from the different pattern of reference group influence: Traditionalism vs. nontraditionalism. Although pockets of tension are likely to exist in some cases in terms of member group allegiances and loyalties, in view of the small and weak influence of friendship interaction in the sex role socialization of young adults, conflict is not very likely.

More important, however, is the finding that parental interaction is more predictive of men's than women's sex role orientation. This result may be explained in the context of recent social conditions in society--the women's movement, the ERA, affirmative action, etc. which have affected

the development of a new set of sex role norms touching the lives of women in particular. The young woman's exposure to an environment which enhances her position in society may lead her to be influenced by more liberal agents than the family such as feminist educators, college education itself or a specific set of sex role issues (_____, 1978). The friendship group gains some importance under such circumstances particularly when role model influences at home are not available as in the case of the lower socioeconomic strata. However, in this group as well as others, the sex role orientation of the young woman tends to derive meaning beyond parental and friendship interaction, possibly from an ideology which satisfies her status and identity needs (_____, 1978).

Nonetheless, the saliency of sex role equality supported by social forces in society has not penetrated the family environment sufficiently enough to alter the traditional modeling transmission effect of the mother on her daughter's sex role orientation via the interaction process, even when she is an achiever. In other words, mothers with a higher socioeconomic level or with some work experience tend to encourage a traditional position as they interact with daughters. For sons of the same background characteristics, indirect interaction is associated with nontraditionalism which changes towards a more conservative posture as sons go home more frequently. Certainly, mothers achieved status per se is no sign of nontraditionalism on her part. Thus, such mothers may socialize their children in terms of traditional sex roles and serve as a model of the exceptional, surprisingly, more for the son than the daughter. It seems that even when the mother has instrumental qualities, her maternal expressive role overrides all other roles especially in her relationships with the daughter.

When the mother is a low achiever or has never worked, her modeling transmission effect is consistently traditional on the daughter's sex role orientation via interaction in any form. The same is true only for sons of nonworking mothers. The status of parents in this family implies that the values of both parents are more traditional and the division of labor at home is more sex typed; daughters in particular growing up in a rather conventional mold possibly share these more traditional values. However, daughters of this background do not completely accept this ideological position as their increased interaction with friends contributes to their nontraditional attitudes relative to beliefs on women's rights and the similar personality disposition of the sexes. Moreover, women of this familial milieu may be more vulnerable to outside potential influences in the absence of role models who support the rising status of women. Consequently, daughters may look for other models like peers who may reinforce a system supportive of modernity.

This study has shown the importance of the modeling transmission effect via reference group interaction as a factor in predicting women's and men's sex role orientation. It is clear that the maternal attributes of the mother provide a different model of behavior for daughters and sons through the communication process. Hoffman (1974) and others (Pasquali and Callegar, 1978; Smith and Self, 1980) caution against trying to predict anything on the basis of such gross categories, as socioeconomic status or employment alone, without linking these variables to situations that would affect mother-child relationships and, thus, mediate the impact of her attributes on the child.

From the standpoint of reference group theory, considering the three attitudinal dimensions, sex role socialization begins at home, and to a limited extent children learn sex role norms from their friends. From a role-model perspective, the data indicate that maternal socioeconomic and work experience characteristics are associated with more traditional sex role concepts for daughters as family interaction increases. This in turn should imply a self-concept for the daughter along the expressive dimension. Sons are affected traditionally only when their mothers have never worked or when they frequently interact at home with mothers who are of a high socioeconomic level. Thus, an instrumental self-concept is conditional.

On practical grounds, to promote acceptance of egalitarian sex role views, mothers need to change their life style at home in order to overcome the traditional overtones of the expressive female role. Resisting an ideology based on the equality of the sexes on the part of the mother, who is an integral member of the family, may increase peer influence or the importance of other role models. The future outlook for the family, however, may well be an acceptance of the new change in the status of the sexes to enhance harmonious relations between parents and children and withstand external social pressures in order to solidify the family unit.

Finally, this research leaves many questions unanswered relative to the relationship between the modeling transition effect of other role models, like the father, in the process of parent-child or peer group relationships which contribute to attitude formation by examining the nature of the content and quality of these supportive associations. We need to further probe into how salient individuals directly perceive reference groups to be, as

well as whether the sex role norms supported by them are congruent or in conflict with norms endorsed by prior or concurrent agents of sex role socialization.

Table 1. Relative Contribution to Variation in Sex Role Orientation Scores by Reference Group Interaction Before and After Covariance Adjustment* for Each Sex and Education of Mother.

Predictors	More Than High School				High School or Less			
	Females		Males		Females		Males	
	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta
PERSONALITY DISPOSITION								
Parental Interaction	(N=139)		(N=68)		(N=171)		(N=106)	
Frequency of home visits	.14	.11	.(8	.13	.02	.03	.10	.11
Duration of home visit	.05	.04	.11	.00	.01	.01	.18**	.20
Frequency of writing home	.20	.21	.09	.05	.16	.17	.12	.14
Frequency of calling home	.10	.10	.32**	.34	.09	.10	.02	.03
multiple R^2	.07		.12		.04		.06	
Friendship Interaction	(N=164)		(N=82)		(N=215)		(N=140)	
Number of best friends	.09	.05	.15	.12	.14**	.16	.02	.02
Frequency of contacts	.16	.15	.17	.16	.07	.09	.11	.11
Time spent with friends	.11	.10	.14	.18	.12	.12	.11	.10
multiple R^2	.04		.07		.04**		.02	
SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL EQUALITY								
Parental Interaction	(N=138)		(N=68)		(N=166)		(N=106)	
Frequency of home visits	.21	.17	.13	.19	.12	.14	.10	.11
Duration of home visit	.03	.04	.13**	.30	.02	.01	.06	.04
Frequency of writing home	.23	.22	.26**	.35	.17	.19	.17	.17
Frequency of calling home	.08	.07	.21**	.32	.09	.08	.10	.09
multiple R^2	.09		.21		.05		.05	
Friendship Interaction	(N=163)		(N=82)		(N=209)		(N=140)	
Number of best friends	.08	.09	.05	.07	.03	.03	.02	.02
Frequency of contacts	.06	.09	.06	.06	.01	.02	.09	.10
Time spent with friends	.11	.11	.25	.24	.11	.12	.07	.06
multiple R^2	.02		.07		.01		.01	
SELF-FULFILLMENT								
Parental Interaction	(N=137)		(N=66)		(N=165)		(N=104)	
Frequency of home visits	.25**	.27	.10	.20	.15	.17	.16	.17
Duration of home visit	.10	.06	.08	.20	.04	.07	.08	.12
Frequency of writing home	.08	.12	.06	.11	.10	.14	.27**	.28
Frequency of calling home	.06	.06	.17	.24	.09	.08	.15	.11
multiple R^2	.08		.08		.05		.13	
Friendship Interaction	(N=162)		(N=79)		(N=209)		(N=136)	
Number of best friends	.07	.06	.04	.01	.26**	.26	.07	.09
Frequency of contacts	.08	.07	.26**	.26	.07	.03	.09	.09
Time spent with friends	.10	.11	.03	.05	.14	.14	.11	.11
multiple R^2	.02		.07		.09**		.03	

* Co-variance adjustment refers to controlling f all the other independent variables listed.

** Significance of F probability < .05 level.

Table 2. Relative Contribution to Variation in Sex Role Orientation Scores by Reference Group Interaction Before and After Covariance Adjustment For Each Sex and Occupation of Mother.

Predictors	Professional and Semiprofessional				Skilled and Semiskilled				Unskilled			
	Females		Males		Females		Males		Females		Males	
	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta
PERSONALITY DISPOSITION												
Parental Interaction	(N=89)		(N=38)		(N=100)		(N=57)		(N=55)		(N=24)	
Frequency of home visits	.14	.12	.48**	.51	.06	.05	.31	.30	.10	.14	.11	.14
Duration of home visit	.00	.01	.14	.17	.03	.04	.11	.09	.17	.19	.10	.08
Frequency of writing home	.13	.14	.33	.19	.24	.27	.26	.24	.08	.11	.09	.08
Frequency of calling home	.14	.16	.12	.23	.11	.15	.37**	.35	.04	.13	.23	.24
multiple R^2	.06		.34		.08		.28**		.05		.08	
Friendship Interaction	(N=99)		(N=49)		(N=126)		(N=61)		(N=62)		(N=33)	
Number of best friends	.05	.09	.08	.07	.07	.05	.19	.19	.35**	.40	.29	.23
Frequency of contacts	.22**	.22	.07	.07	.12	.13	.02	.01	.09	.14	.18	.17
Time spent with friends	.14	.10	.18	.18	.11	.12	.11	.11	.16	.19	.12	.15
multiple R^2	.07		.04		.03		.05		.18**		.12	
SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL EQUALITY												
Parental Interaction	(N=88)		(N=38)		(N=99)		(N=57)		(N=53)		(N=24)	
Frequency of home visits	.20	.20	.14	.12	.14	.24	.06	.07	.21	.26	.20	.18
Duration of home visit	.02	.02	.12	.08	.12	.12	.08	.08	.01	.01	.02	.01
Frequency of writing home	.26	.30	.27	.27	.17	.24	.28	.28	.22	.27	.40	.40
Frequency of calling home	.09	.14	.19	.25	.01	.01	.29	.29	.04	.12	.32	.28
multiple R^2	.13		.14		.09		.17		.11		.28	
Friendship Interaction	(N=98)		(N=49)		(N=125)		(N=61)		(N=60)		(N=33)	
Number of best friends	.07	.06	.06	.04	.06	.08	.01	.02	.14	.17	.09	.16
Frequency of contacts	.06	.03	.02	.02	.05	.05	.10	.10	.03	.06	.06	.17
Time spent with friends	.15	.14	.22	.22	.13	.14	.16	.16	.06	.10	.05	.16
multiple R^2	.03		.05		.03		.04		.03		.03	
SELF-FULFILLMENT												
Parental Interaction	(N=88)		(N=36)		(N=98)		(N=56)		(N=53)		(N=25)	
Frequency of home visits	.21	.24	.31	.32	.08	.16	.09	.05	.17	.18	.15	.23
Duration of home visit	.18	.20	.03	.05	.00	.01	.12	.11	.04	.03	.12	.33
Frequency of writing home	.06	.13	.39	.44	.19	.23	.49**	.50	.14	.15	.39	.48
Frequency of calling home	.10	.13	.21	.32	.13	.12	.30	.30	.09	.04	.19	.18
multiple R^2	.10		.31		.07		.34**		.06		.29	
Friendship Interaction	(N=97)		(N=47)		(N=124)		(N=59)		(N=60)		(N=34)	
Number of best friends	.15	.12	.02	.01	.22**	.21	.04	.03	.22**	.31	.15	.10
Frequency of contacts	.18	.18	.18	.18	.01	.03	.10	.08	.02	.01	.05	.11
Time spent with friends	.07	.11	.02	.03	.17	.15	.17	.16	.24**	.32	.24	.27
multiple R^2	.06		.03		.07		.04		.14		.09	

** Significance of F probability < .05 level.

Table 3. Relative Contribution to Variation in Sex Role Orientation Scores By Reference Group Interaction Before and After Covariance Adjustment for Each Sex and Mother's Work Experience.

Predictors	Work Experience				No Work Experience			
	Females		Males		Females		Males	
	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta
PERSONALITY DISPOSITION								
Parental Interaction	(N=204)		(N=116)		(N=77)		(N=41)	
Frequency of home visits	.11	.10	.10	.11	.11	.11	.22	.26
Duration of home visit	.04	.03	.05	.05	.01	.01	.08	.07
Frequency of writing home	.15	.14	.05	.05	.18	.17	.19	.26
Frequency of calling home	.03	.02	.15	.13	.16	.17	.10	.14
multiple R^2	.03		.04		.07		.12	
Friendship Interaction	(N=247)		(N=149)		(N=96)		(N=55)	
Number of best friends	.11	.10	.09	.06	.14	.15	.18	.16
Frequency of contacts	.10	.08	.04	.05	.12	.16	.08	.11
Time spent with friends	.06	.06	.12	.11	.15	.15	.19	.17
multiple R^2	.02		.02		.06		.07	
SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL EQUALITY								
Parental Interaction	(N=200)		(N=116)		(N=75)		(N=41)	
Frequency of home visits	.02	.07	.10	.09	.12	.13	.17	.11
Duration of home visit	.05	.04	.08	.08	.03	.01	.08	.06
Frequency of writing home	.17	.19	.21	.20	.17	.18	.46	.46
Frequency of calling home	.01	.02	.19	.16	.03	.00	.25	.17
multiple R^2	.04		.09		.05		.27	
Friendship Interaction	(N=243)		(N=149)		(N=93)		(N=55)	
Number of best friends	.07	.07	.07	.05	.03	.06	.07	.09
Frequency of contacts	.02	.01	.04	.04	.12	.13	.14	.14
Time spent with friends	.16**	.16	.18	.17	.08	.08	.05	.06
multiple R^2	.03		.04		.02		.03	
SELF-FULFILLMENT								
Parental Interaction	(N=198)		(N=114)		(N=75)		(N=41)	
Frequency of home visits	.15	.18	.15	.22	.36	.27	.04	.07
Duration of home visit	.06	.04	.10	.16	.08	.10	.05	.22
Frequency of writing home	.11	.14	.20	.22	.20	.10	.26	.41
Frequency of calling home	.02	.06	.12	.10	.31	.22	.29**	.47
multiple R^2	.05		.10		.19		.22	
Friendship Interaction	(N=240)		(N=146)		(N=95)		(N=53)	
Number of best friends	.22**	.21	.03	.02	.15	.14	.23**	.27
Frequency of contacts	.10	.06	.06	.05	.03	.01	.05	.03
Time spent with friends	.06	.04	.02	.02	.17	.17	.20	.25
multiple R^2	.05**		.00		.05			

** Significance of F probability < .05 level.

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